An Elementary School Teacher's Secret Life As A White Nationalist Writer

Benjamin Welton uses pen names to write racist articles. He's also a teacher, PhD student, and freelance writer for major media outlets. Now he's been exposed.

By Christopher Mathias

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ILLUSTRATION: REBECCA ZISSER/HUFFPOST; PHOTOS: GETTY

Benjamin Welton, an elementary school teacher in Massachusetts, leads a double life as a white nationalist writer, calling himself the "Spooky Nationalist."

In 2017, a writer named Sinclair Jenkins published an essay for the white supremacist website American Renaissance titled "From Wide-Eyed Liberal to Race Realist," which described a series of "political awakenings" that he had experienced.

Jenkins wrote that his radicalization began in the Navy, where it angered him to see "blacks" be mean to his fellow white sailors. Later, in graduate school, he grew disgusted over the "ingrained culture of anti-white hatred" in academia. "Also, once I began paying attention to the news, I started seeing why so many people in my hometown took a dim view of blacks," wrote Jenkins, who noted that he grew up somewhere in Appalachia. "After Ferguson and Baltimore, I understood that pumping money into the ghetto would never fix things." Later, he said, he discovered writers like John Derbyshire and Ann Coulter, who shared his distaste for immigrants, and websites like American Renaissance and VDare, which shared his firmly

worldview.

Near the end of the article, Jenkins noted that he was a teacher, an audacious admission to make in a white supremacist publication.

But "Sinclair Jenkins," HuffPost has now confirmed, is really a pseudonym for Benjamin Welton, a 33-year-old Boston University history PhD candidate who, until this week, taught English, social studies and computer science at Star Academy, an elementary school in Massachusetts. When HuffPost contacted the school for comment, Welton was put on leave, and was fired shortly before this article was published.

For years, he has also worked as a freelance writer for major media outlets, including The Atlantic and Vice, for whom he published articles about esoteric spy and detective novels. He also wrote pieces for the The Daily Caller and The Weekly Standard, which let him make his racist sympathies clear in print.

He was meanwhile using multiple pen names to secretly author fascist screeds online, in some cases advocating violence to establish a whites-only ethnostate.

"No mercy for our enemies. Do not weep, for they are not human," Welton wrote in a pseudonymous social media post on March 31, seven months into his job as an elementary school teacher. "Treat those who want to abolish 'whiteness' with the same venom if not more. They deserve medieval punishments."

Like many conservatives, Welton has expressed anger about the teaching of "critical race theory" in American schools. Last August, shortly before he began teaching at the Star Academy, he tweeted under a pseudonym that a return to American greatness "requires defunding critical race theory." It's clear from his pseudonymous writings where his real objection lies: criticism of white people.

"I now try to inject race realism into my working life," he wrote as Jenkins in the 2017 American Renaissance article. "When I teach my students or write papers, I refuse to engage in cultural Marxism or in anti-white rhetoric."

A group of anti-fascist researchers, the Anonymous Comrades Collective, figured out Welton's double life and shared the details with HuffPost. Many nameless fascists today lead double lives, hiding behind avatars to promote their noxious beliefs online while holding down respectable day jobs in education, military, law enforcement, medicine or the government. But leading an extremist life online carries the risk of exposure and the fear that one day soon it may all come crashing down — something it appears Welton may have anticipated.

Welton did not respond to HuffPost's repeated requests for comment. After emailing and direct-messaging him last week, he deleted all of his pseudonymous social media accounts on Twitter, Poa.st and Gab — all of which he used to spew racist invective — along with his

magazine he'd recently launched for fascist fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

But the content of those pages was already saved and archived by the Anonymous Comrades Collective, who earlier this month showed HuffPost evidence they had collected indicating that Welton was not only the man behind the bylines "Sinclair Jenkins," but also "Jake Bowyer" and "Elias Kingston." His writing had started to generate interest among major figures on the far right.

Mr. Welton

HUFFPOST

White nationalist teacher Benjamin Welton in a since-deleted photo from the Faculty section of Star Academy's website. On the chalkboard behind him is the name of an Austrian fascist (circled).

Welton's career as a teacher didn't begin at Star Academy. He has taught at the University of Vermont and Boston University during his postgraduate studies.

On his since-deleted LinkedIn page, Welton claimed to be currently "teaching grades two through five" at Star Academy, leading "seven classes a day, both online and in-person."

Earlier this week, before they fired Welton, Star Academy administrators said in an emailed statement that they had not been aware of the "concerning online publications allegedly

Star Academy, the statement continued, is "committed to a diverse and inclusive community and embraces our responsibility as an educational institution to foster a safe and healthy environment for our students. We do not support, condone, or agree with white supremacism or white separatist ideologies."

After HuffPost's inquiries, Star Academy deleted the Faculty page from its website, which had included a photo of Welton and a brief description of his job. The photo, which appears to be a selfie, shows Welton wearing a shirt, tie and sweater, in front of a chalkboard, a wry toothless smile on his face. Written on the chalkboard behind him is "Dollfuß (1934)" — a likely reference to Engelbert Dollfuss, an Austrian fascist politician who briefly served as the country's chancellor until his assassination in 1934.

It's unclear in what context the fascist's name — replete with the unique German letter ß, also known as a "sharp S" — was written on the chalkboard, or whether it was Welton who wrote it. Star Academy said the photo was not taken on their premises. Spokesmen for the University of Vermont said Boston University said it was impossible to tell if the photo was taken on their respective campuses.

The Boston University spokesman confirmed that Welton is currently a student there, but wouldn't comment on whether the school would investigate his white nationalist activism. The spokesman also wouldn't comment on why the school removed Welton's student profile page from its website on Tuesday night.

Exclusive: Florida Public School Teacher Has A White Nationalist Podcast

Dayanna Volitich suggests Muslims be eradicated from the earth, believes anti-Semitic conspiracy theories ... and teaches middle school social studies.

HuffPost / Mar 3, 2018

Florida middle school, had been secretly hosting a white nationalist podcast on which she bragged about radicalizing her students.

"That age when they first become teenagers is very critical," Volitich said in a podcast episode. "They've already been indoctrinated for 12 years before coming to me. Some of them, I believe, were red-pilled as 13-year-olds. And I think that was kind of a cool thing to watch. I was watching them just open their eyes and seeing what is happening in this country."

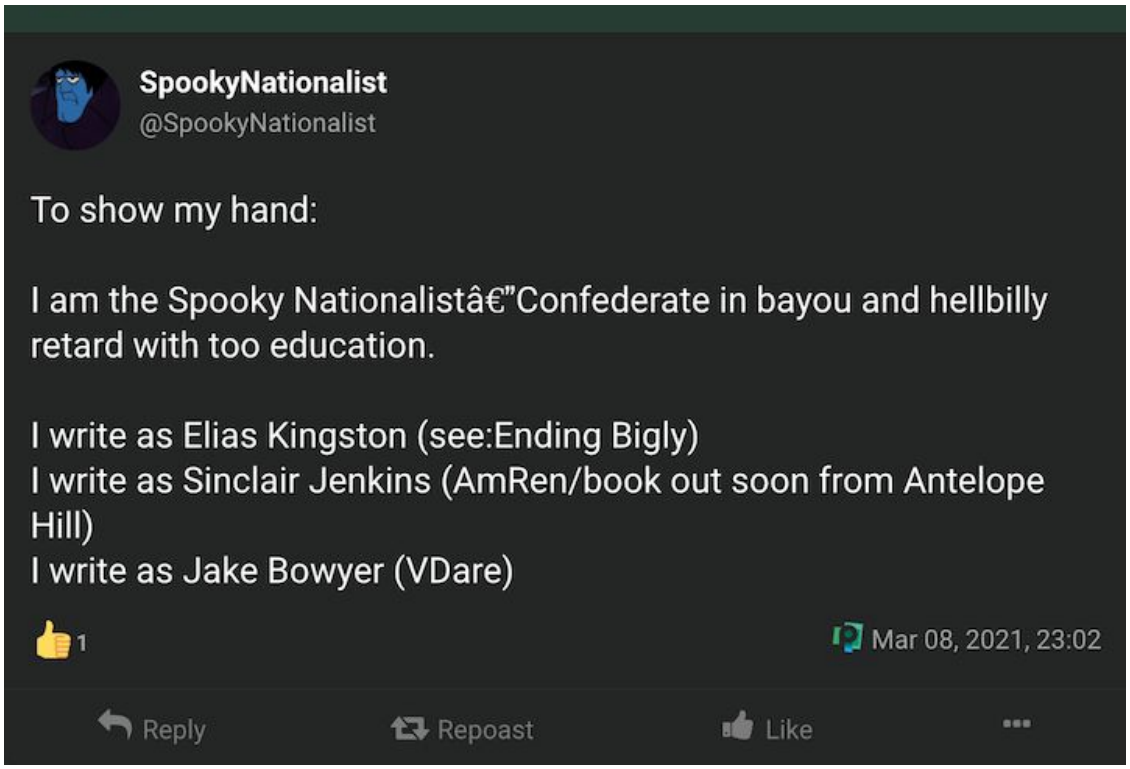
Being "red-pilled" is alt-right lingo for awakening to white nationalist beliefs. Volitich — who reportedly told students that the Ku Klux Klan was a "good thing" — was fired after HuffPost exposed her.

Elsewhere in recent years, a charter school principal in New Orleans was fired after videos surfaced showing him wearing rings with white nationalist symbols, and a substitute teacher in Maryland who coached a high school field hockey team was fired after local media realized he was a prominent figure in a white nationalist group and had participated in the deadly "Unite The Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

There is no evidence of Welton indoctrinating his students at Star Academy but a scathing student review posted to Docsity in 2012, while he was teaching at the University of Vermont, offers a glimpse of his teaching style.

"A teacher with too many personal opinions and present them as facts," the review begins. "Full of himself and misogynistic. A very unpleasant person overall. He can't help himself from spewing his: Proto-Fascist, Libertarian, Anti-Feminist and Neo-Conservative propaganda in front of the class."

Exposing The "Spooky Nationalist"



SCREENSHOT

A post from Welton's "Spooky Nationalist" account on Poa.st served as a skeleton key for unlocking his real offline identity.

On March 8, 2021, a white nationalist account called the "Spooky Nationalist" on Poa.st — a Twitter knockoff crawling with racists and extremists — posted a message that caught the attention of anti-fascist researchers.

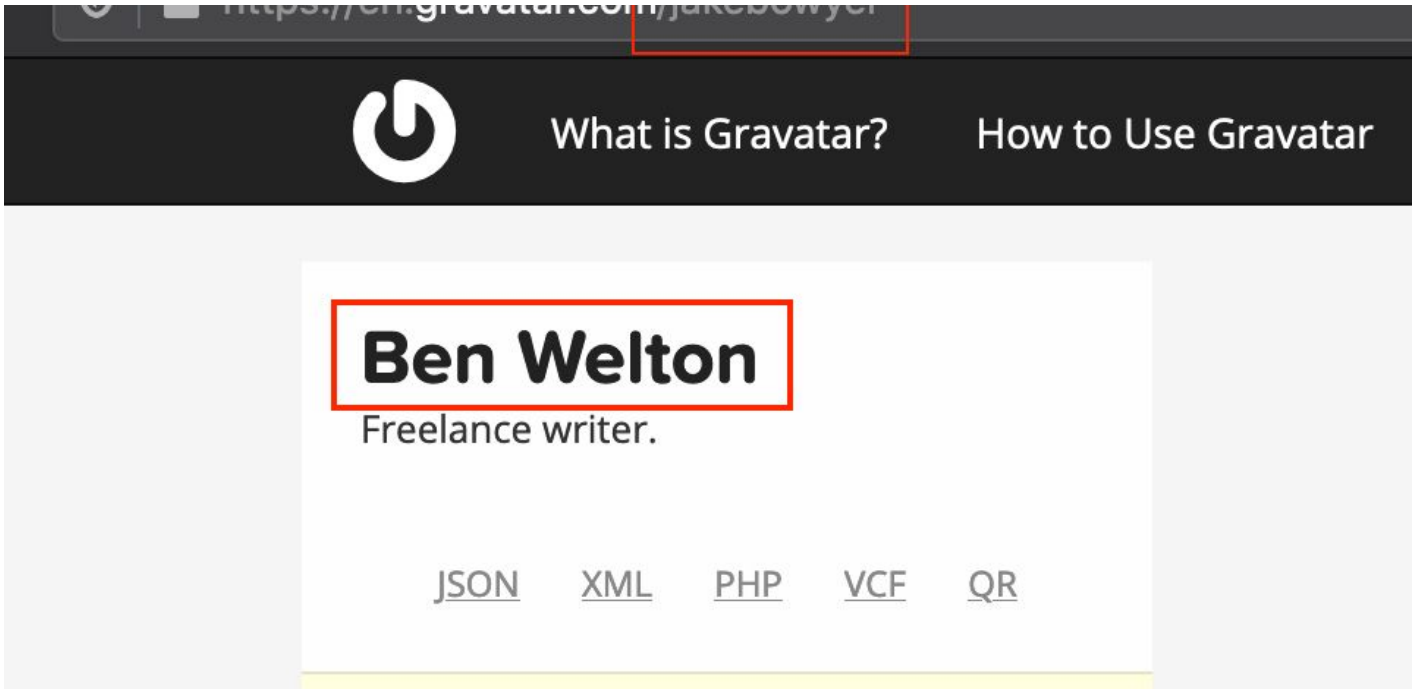
"To show my hand: I am the Spooky Nationalist's Confederate in bayou and hellbilly retard with too education," the post began. "I write as Elias Kingston (see:Ending Bigly). I write as Sinclair Jenkins (AmRen/book out soon from Antelope Hill). I write as Jake Bowyer (VDare)."

The Spooky Nationalist had slipped up: Announcing that all of these different aliases belonged to him was a clue that opened up new avenues to investigate his real offline identity.

The anti-fascists at the Anonymous Comrades Collective got to work.

"Interestingly, when we researched the pen name 'Jake Bowyer' we found that the URL for the 'Jake Bowyer' Gravatar page displayed another name: Ben Welton," the anti-fascists wrote in a blog post published Monday.

Gravatar is a service that creates "globally unique avatars," according to its website, allowing users to use the same avatar across different internet platforms.



SCREENSHOT

A screenshot from Gravatar showing a connection between Benjamin Welton and one of his pen names, Jake Bowyer.

There were other connections between the Spooky Nationalist and Welton. In March, the account posted a link for followers to buy a book called "Sick Inside the Citadel." The author of this collection of short stories and poems? One Benjamin Welton.

In December 2020, the Spooky Nationalist wrote on his Twitter account: "Be on lookout for the next issue of Military History magazine from http://H.Net. The cover story will be about Raymond Westerling and the Dutch police actions in the East Indies."

An article about Raymond Westerling did appear in the next issue of Military History magazine. Its author, again, was listed as Welton.

The Spooky Nationalist also sometimes revealed other, sadder personal information that matches details from Welton's life.

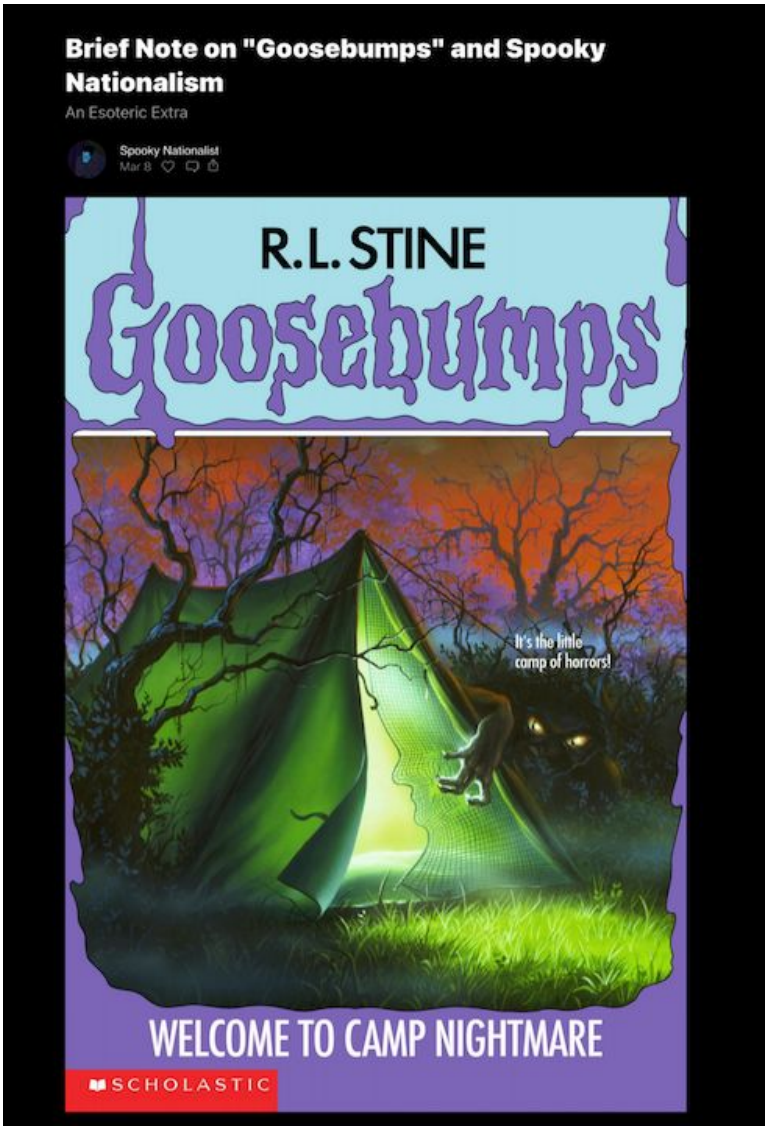
"I used to be suicidal," one post began. "A veritable incel. An ex stabbed me. Mom died. Life sucked until I found this mob. Now, in my 30s, I'm writing novels, non-fic books, and training for the Foreign Legion. We're all going to reach glory, dudes."

Public records reviewed by HuffPost show that Welton is in his 30s, and that his mother died in 1999, when she was 39.

"I was once in an English grad school program," read another Spooky Nationalist post. "As a Navy vet, no self-respecting white man should join the US military," read another.

Welton's since-deleted LinkedIn profile states that he got a Master's in English at the University of Vermont, a fact the school confirmed, and that he served in the U.S. Navy.

the military in 2018, having reached the rank of Master-at-Arms 2nd Class as a member of the naval military police. He received two awards during his time in the service: a National Defense Service Medal and a Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon.



SCREENSHOT

A screenshot from Welton's since-deleted Substack account.

In another post, the Spooky Nationalist implored his followers to submit writing to an online magazine he'd launched called The Lovecraft Conservative, named after the late horror fiction writer H.P. Lovecraft.

In an essay for the magazine, "Elias Kingston" — one of the Spooky Nationalist's pen names — wrote wistfully of being a "Son of Appalachia," who has family in Elkins, West Virginia, but who now lives in Boston.

Welton is currently enrolled at Boston University. Public records show he currently lives in Brighton, Massachusetts, and has family in Elkins, West Virginia.

a concerning clue that he might work with children.

"I have been consuming a lot of the Goosebumps series lately," the Spooky Nationalist wrote in a Substack blog, referring to the popular 1990s children's horror book series. "Easy access to these classic paperbacks is one of the few perks of my day job. Since I usually read about one volume a night, I find myself returning to the small library of the macabre every morning."

The Spooky Nationalist, after acknowledging that Goosebumps' author is Jewish — "he writes with the spirit of Deep America, even if his connections to said ethnos is tenuous" — waxed poetic about being reconnected with the books.

Whenever he saw the distinctive Goosebumps cover art, he wrote, "I'm immediately transported back to my ancestral home in Fairmont, West Virginia. I recall the feel of warm summer days riding bikes on Avalon Road, and cool nights reading Goosebumps while waiting for the werewolves to howl outside of my bedroom window. It was such a charmed childhood, filled with mystery and adventure. Then it collapsed because of the cancer of the 1960s and the rotten ideas that turned so many of our parents into giant libidos and me-first gimme gimmes."

Public records show the Welton family having once lived on Avalon Road in Fairmont, West Virginia.

The Fascist Freelancer

Though Welton often employed pseudonyms, on other occasions he simply used his real name in far-right publications.

In 2018, he wrote a racist article called "Against Education" for a far-right blog called The American Sun without using a pseudonym.

"Your typical man on the street in America 2018 A.D. will come up with a small catalog of answers about what to do with our education system," Welton wrote. "The race realist will speak of declining worldwide IQs and America's increasing mongrelization driven by unassimilated races with below-average intelligence capacities." (That same year Welton, writing under the name "Sinclair Jenkins" called himself a "race realist" in American Renaissance.)

Welton's article argued that education should largely be reserved for geniuses — of which he seems to consider himself — not for the general, dumber public. "There is not a Rembrandt hidden in each booger-eater, and the next Tesla is not currently marching toward the U.S. border from Guatemala," he wrote.

For Terror House Mag — founded by prominent misogynist Matt Forney — Welton published fiction and poetry ("Cold water rots the walls/ but his fingers seize / her lovely lips / To kiss away the dirt / of former flings").

spy novels and the British empire. In Taki's Magazine, a paleoconservative website founded by Greek-born socialite Taki Theodoracopulos, a self-described anti-Semite with a history of hiring white supremacist editors, Welton wrote admiringly of Francisco Franco, the brutal fascist dictator of Spain.

And as recently as March 21, Welton's byline sat atop an article about spy novels in The Epoch Times, a right-wing newspaper with ties to the China-based spiritual group Falun Gong that was deeply invested in reelecting former President Donald Trump.

SOPA IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

A copy of The Epoch Times.

Even when writing in major right-wing outlets, Welton wasn't exactly hiding his fascist sympathies. In December 2015, he wrote an article titled "What Exactly Is The Alternative Right?" for the since-shuttered conservative site The Weekly Standard.

Welton clearly expresses excitement about the "alternative right," a rebranding of white nationalism, writing that the movement had "taken the fight to the left in the best way possible," adding, "Rather than concede the moral high ground to the left, the alt right turns the left's moralism on its head and makes it a badge of honor to be called 'racist,' 'homophobic,' and 'sexist.'"

by Welton titled "The European Quandary," in which he lashed out at different European countries for allowing in Muslim refugees.

"Europe, like panda bears, seems little interested in saving its own species," Welton wrote. "Despite the fact that anyone with eyes can see that the recent influx of 'refugees' from North Africa and the Middle East (a majority are not from Syria—don't believe that lie) has been a cultural disaster, few leaders and not enough voters seem to recognize it as a problem."

"The cuckus Europeanicus," he added, using a term he coined, "is a blind, stubborn creature that refuses to smell the shawarma cooking right under its nose."

A spokesman for The Daily Caller, a site founded by Fox News host Tucker Carlson, told HuffPost in a statement that "these views are of course abhorrent to us. We are not privy to the details behind this one off Op-Ed from five years ago, nor the editorial processes of Daily Caller's prior ownership when it comes to the thousands of earlier Op-Eds going back to its founding in 2010."

The spokesman didn't address a HuffPost question regarding whether white nationalists frequently publishing work on The Daily Caller has ever inspired self-reflection among the site's editors.

For Vice and The Atlantic, both major mainstream publications where he hasn't had a byline since 2015, Welton seemed to modulate his extremist views, writing about literature with a particular focus on spy novels and private eye detective stories. "He has not written for VICE in years," a Vice Media Group spokesman told HuffPost, noting that Welton was a freelancer who only published one story. The Atlantic didn't respond to a request for comment.

It was under his fake pen names and on his social media accounts that Welton really let his fascist freak flag fly, and even started to attract a following.

A Rising Star, Exposed

VDare is a far-right nonprofit which recently bought a historic castle in Welton's native West Virginia. The website it runs is one of the most prominent white nationalist propaganda outlets in the country, and among its writers is Jake Bowyer, one of Welton's pen names.

Welton has written half a dozen articles for the site, most recently in October 2020, including an article in which he argues that "rape culture" on college campuses is a myth, adding that if there were rapists in higher education, it was due to immigration.

"American college campuses today are essentially playgrounds for far-Left agitators, anti-White elitists, and subsidized international students," he wrote. "Just as abroad, if there is a 'rape culture' on campus, it is largely being created because of the importation of Third Worlders."

name Sinclair Jenkins, most recently in September, when he started teaching at Star Academy.

While working as a teacher, he seems to have focused his writing energies on his own websites, including The Lovecraft Conservative, where the site's mission statement made clear his specific brand of white nationalism. "We believe in hierarchy, monarchy, the importance of breeding, and a definite and distinct ethnos," it said. "We are unabashedly European. We support Europa, Christendom, and her children scattered across the colonies. Our enemy is materialism; our enemy is liberalism. But we are not driven by hate, but rather by creativity."

SCREENSHOT

An account of Welton's promoting his book, which was published last month by Antelope Hill, a publishing house listed as a white nationalist hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

It was published by Antelope Hill, a Pennsylvania-based publishing house that is listed as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The book seems to have put him on the radar of some big names on the far right. Earlier this month, when Antelope Hill tweeted out a link to the book, it earned a retweet from Bronze Age Pervert, the pseudonymous alt-right misogynist who has gained a large following in America, including among many on Capitol Hill.

Welton, using the Spooky Nationalist Twitter account, thanked Bronze Age Pervert for the boost, writing: "Your gesture will always be honored."

Perhaps feeling emboldened, Welton last month started appearing on Terror House Radio, the podcast of Terror House Press, the publishing house run by Forney and neo-Nazi Bryden Proctor.

He appeared on two live-streamed episodes, using his own name, to promote another book he published with Terror House.

Since September, when he started teaching at the elementary school, Welton has seemed to grow bolder and bolder, and to also maybe prepare for being exposed.

In a post on Poa.st in late March, he wrote that he would be publishing multiple books this year, and that he had started sending applications to mercenary groups across the world — including in Singapore and Australia — "in order to help our global fight."

That same month he posted a brief manifesto of sorts to Poa.st. "My Spooky Rules," the post began, before listing off 13 "rules."

"Liberalism/Marxism/Enlightenment are mind parasites that mostly rot whites."

Rule No. 13 seemed the most telling. "Operating in the darkness is preferable," Welton wrote, "but a front-facing and visible presence is necessary to make dark work truly impactful."

A few weeks later, Welton posted a menacing image to Poa.st. It showed the book "On Resistance to Evil by Force" by Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin, sitting on a table next to an empty pistol holster.

"Reminder," he captioned the photo.

SCREENSHOT

A menacing post from Welton's Spooky Nationalist account on Poa.st. Welton received a Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon in the Navy.

Only time will tell what becomes of Welton now, although it seems he likely will no longer be teaching. If that scathing 2012 student review of him as a college teacher at the University of Vermont is any indication, he won't exactly be missed in the classroom.

"One of the weirdest teachers I ever had," the student wrote. "I am convinced that the only positive comment found on this site was written by Ben Welton himself. Benjamin Welton is arrogant and his egocentrism makes him treat his students merely as objects (especially us girls) to enhance his pride."